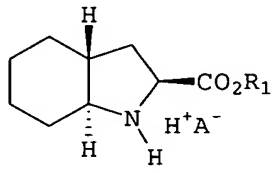
ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method for the synthesis of a compound of formula I as a mixture of enantiomers,



(I)

(wherein R_1 is H or an acid protective group and H^+A^- indicates an optional acid with which the compound of formula I may form an ammonium salt)

said method comprising;

A) reacting a cyclohexyl aziridine with a dialkyl malonate, whereby to provide a trans-fused 3-alkylcarbonyl-octahydro-indol-2-one;

B) decarbonylation at the 3-position, conversion of the ketone of the resulting trans-octahydro-indol-2-one to an optionally protected carboxylic acid group; and

C) optionally removing any N-substitution if necessary.